



**POCKET GUIDE TO**

# **WEST AFRICA**

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A POCKET GUIDE TO

# WEST AFRICA



WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

# A P O C K E T G U I D E T O W E S T A F R I C A

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## INTRODUCTION . . .

*Boasting at home is not Victory; a parade is not combat; when battle comes the valiant will be known.*

(AFRICAN PROVERB.)

IN West Africa you will be playing an important role in the world-wide strategy to smash Hitler and the Axis. On Africa's West Coast you will be guarding vital supply lines to North Africa, Egypt, India, Russia, and even China. From this region must come much needed strategic materials for our own war machine and for all of the United Nations. The Nazis had been waiting for the chance to execute their elaborate plans for the exploitation of Africa's vast resources and labor supply. Your presence in West Africa means that these plans have been put on ice. Thus you are striking a hard blow at Hitler, and at Hirohito, too.

Before the war not many Americans visited West Africa. But America was well-known there for American goods are popular. Educated West Africans have long stressed the liberality of American ideals and policies. Ordinarily, all white persons in Africa are described as "Europeans".



But the term "American" has a special meaning there, and in your uniforms you will be quickly identified as "Americans," or, as some native peoples will pronounce it, "'mericans." Many West Africans know the story of the independent Negro Republic of Liberia and America's role in creating it. In their minds Americans symbolize friendliness and a square deal.

Except for men in uniform you will see few white faces in West Africa. There are practically no white settlers and most of the white men are government officials, traders, or missionaries; there are few white women. The whites are concentrated mainly in the few coastal towns, such as Dakar, Accra, Takoradi, and Lagos. The population is almost completely African and varies in color from jet black to golden brown.

West Africa may seem strange to you at first, but you will soon find it easy to feel at home. Both the Europeans (these will be mainly English and French) and the Africans like and respect America and Americans. They will be very friendly to you and will expect in return only that you respect them and their way of doing things. Good will toward America is a valuable asset and you will want to protect it. You will understand that not only you as an individual but also your nation will be judged by how *you* act and what *you* say. Even this brief introduction to West

Africa, its people, and customs may aid you in avoiding anything that might stir up suspicion or even hatred of Americans—and thus serve Hitler's cause.



*Inquiry saves a man from making mistakes.* (AFRICAN PROVERB.)

#### WHO AND WHAT YOU WILL SEE

YOU probably haven't had a chance to learn very much about West Africa except as Hollywood pictures it. There are no men like Tarzan there and no Tarzan mates in leopard skins. You probably won't see any steaming jungles, or herds of wild animals either; and certainly no naked cannibals. You may hear some African drums at night—beaten at some African ceremony or at an African dance. You will find the rhythm, especially the off-beat, rather familiar—that is if you're a jitterbug. In the towns you may even find Africans fox-trotting and waltzing to phonograph music or to African jazz bands. Towns like Lagos have African dance halls and Dakar has night clubs.

But, on the whole, West Africa is really a very quiet,

peaceful farming country, with great stretches of uncultivated land.

West Africans are not savages, nor are they naked—though outside of the towns many of them don't wear much. You will have nothing to fear from the people during either day or night. They will be pleasant and cooperative, though a bit shy outside the towns, unless you give them cause to be otherwise. In West Africa, as in the United States, a tip (or "dash" as the Africans call it) will help when you want something done.

The point is, of course, that though darker than most peoples you know, and differing considerably in the way they eat, dress, and live, the West Africans are pretty much like people all over the world. In town, there are officials, clerks, artisans, laborers, and hired help; in the countryside, peasant farmers. They marry, raise families, drink the native brews, enjoy their ceremonies and parties, react to hardships as you do. Like white folks the West Africans have upper and lower classes and it would be a serious mistake to assume that all Africans are alike or that they all think and act alike. You will notice a marked difference, for instance, between the Africans of the towns, who have adopted many customs of the white man, and the relatively primitive Africans of the country. The former are usually described as "detribalized," mean-



ing that they have broken away from the ties and customs that bound them to their tribal society. They no longer serve their tribal chiefs, and are less devoted to their tribal religion than their ancestors were. Many of them are well-educated. Some hold college and professional degrees from universities in Europe and the United States. Many have been converted to Christianity and live in their bungalows and have gardens just as you do at home. They have their own newspapers, churches, forums, political organizations, labor unions, social and athletic clubs.

On the other hand, the African of the country is a farmer whose main interest is to get enough out of the

land for his family to live on. He usually follows the customs and religion of his tribe. He is uneducated *but not unwise*. His women and children work hard in the field, and it is usually his wife who brings the spare produce to the markets on regular days.

Africans are no lazier than other people in tropical climates. They can and will work hard when necessary. Their codes of right and wrong and their religions differ from our own, but they are neither loose nor irreligious. They take their religions seriously. Don't belittle their gods; don't call them heathens. Their gods are as real to them as ours is to us.

All along the West Coast of Africa, and especially in the British territories, there are groups of educated young Africans who are very proud of their race and their country. They are somewhat more sensitive to slurs and insults than others; it's best not to discuss political issues with them. They look with hope on the future and expect a new deal after the war. The educated West Africans are fully aware of Hitler's designs on Africa and the Nazi scorn for the black people. They know of the false Nazi theory of "master" and "slave" races. They are vigorously anti-Hitler. While many of them also hold grievances and suspicions, some just and some unjust, against their present white rulers, you—don't forget—

are *not* going to West Africa to settle internal problems. When such subjects arise, listen—and say nothing. You won't be well-enough informed to discuss these problems anyway, and you are bound to offend someone if you do.

You will serve our cause best by doing everything possible to get and hold the friendship of both Africans and Europeans in West Africa. All of you will have to be good diplomats as well as good soldiers. Remember that the educated African of the town is even more sensitive about racial issues than the American Negro, and admires dignity and reserve.

Though apparently plain, simple, and trusting, the uneducated African is nobody's fool. You will find him shrewd in sizing up character and personality, and resourceful in dealing with people. As many of the West Africans are *Moslems*, they follow the religion known as *Islam*. This was founded by the Arab prophet Mohammed 1,300 years ago and was brought to Africa by the Arabs. The Moslems, who can usually be identified in West Africa by their red caps or fezzes and their long white gowns, believe in one God as we do. But Moslems scorn Christians and Jews because they do not accept the prophet Mohammed. They look down even more scornfully on those West Africans who cling to their tribal religions.



The two most numerous Moslem groups in West Africa are the Hausa and Mandingo. The populations of the large trading towns of Northern Nigeria and the French Soudan are almost entirely Moslem. The teachings of Islam, modified by African beliefs, have greatly influenced the social and political life of these communities. Islam emphasizes the equality of all races and men and this appeals to the African.

Moslems in their fezzes and gowns are usually better clothed than any but the educated Africans of the towns, although their women do not veil their faces. Moslems of the Mandingo and Hausa tribes travel all over West Africa as traders, missionaries and magicians. The traders are shrewd and always ask a price several times higher than they expect to get. When they have reached their bottom price, however, they can't be budged. They make and sell those small leather packets which you see hanging from the necks of many West Africans. These packets contain written verses from the Koran—the sacred book of Islam—and are believed to protect the wearer from harm.

Hundreds of West Africans are converted to Islam each year.

West African Moslems, as a rule, are prouder and more independent than other West Africans. They are

also particular. In dealing with them you should observe certain rules. Never offer them pork or any products of the pig, for their religion teaches that the pig is an unclean animal. They must not be interrupted when they are praying to Allah. For one month each year—the month of the Moslem fast of Ramadan—many Moslems will neither eat nor drink between dawn and sunset. Do not try to get them to break this fast. They may be tired and irritable during this period and it will be wise to go easy. (In 1943, the fast will begin September 1; in 1944 on August 20.) Where there are enough Moslems in a community there you will find a mosque. This is their church and they are very touchy about it. Never enter a mosque unless a Moslem asks you to go in with him, and, when you do, be sure to take off your shoes. Don't loiter about a mosque; don't try to peek inside. You may run across groups of Moslems reading the Koran and glorifying Allah with chanting and drumming. Don't get too near; don't laugh; don't try to take pictures, or you may have to defend yourself against an angry mob. They take their religion very seriously.

The Europeans in West Africa are like the Englishmen and Frenchmen you might meet anywhere. Some of their customs are different from ours but not radically so. You will find, perhaps, that the English don't go about



their work with our usual hustle and bustle. But they have a habit of getting their work done. They are cool and have a tough job on their hands in West Africa. The French, as you know, have had particularly hard sledding, and the Frenchmen in West Africa have suffered greatly. They are on our side and if treated with consideration, they will be of great service to our common cause.



#### THE VALUE OF GOOD WILL

AFRICA isn't much good to anyone without the Africans. They load and unload the ships; they are building airfields and roads, and improving harbors; they drive trucks (or "lorries" as they are called in British West Africa); row surfboats across dangerous sand bars; work in fields, railroads, and in office and kitchen. Africans produce food for themselves and for you. They will probably build the barracks you live in out of the lumber or the bricks they

have made. They gather rubber, produce vegetable oils, and mine the tin, manganese, and chrome we need so badly for the war.

The African has also given his blood and life as a fighter in the common struggle. British West African troops fought valiantly in the Ethiopian campaign. The French Senegalese have had a long and distinguished record as fearless combat troops and are now fighting with us in North Africa. The West Africans are our allies and will help us on to victory.

The educated African knows that Hitler despises him. He has heard of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms and knows that the United States considers men as equal. The African is valuable to us as a friend; useless or even dangerous as an enemy. Race prejudice against the African or against American Negro troops in Africa would be a good way to turn the African against us. Everyone is entitled to his own prejudices but it would be only sensible for those who have them to keep them under cover when such high stakes as the war and men's lives are on the table. None of us wants to aid Hitler.





*Without powder a gun is nothing but a stick.* (AFRICAN PROVERB.)

#### THE COUNTRY

THE territories which make up West Africa are on the west and under (or south) side of the big hump you will see as you look at the map of Africa. Along most of the West African coast runs an intricate series of lagoons and swamps, fed by winding rivers. In most places there are sand bars which only surfboats can cross, and there are but few places at which a ship can dock. When you leave the coast you will cross a rising coastal plain covered with the dense growth of the tropical rain forests. Beyond this plain is a broad ridge which slopes off gently to the northern grasslands and ends up at the Great Sahara desert. Numerous short streams find their drainage on the southern side of this ridge, while the headwaters of the two great West African river systems—the Niger and the Senegal—lie to the north. North of the ridge, there is a short “rainy season” and a long “dry season”—there is no summer and no winter as we know them. South of the

ridge, the dry season is very short. Though rains are torrential, acute water shortages can develop during the dry season in areas where there are no rivers.

The climate of the regions of West Africa is controlled by the two factors of season and distance from the coast. In the “dry” season, the hot winds from the Sahara blow dust from the roads and fields; crack furniture where it is glued. They may parch your face and lips—keep them greased if you can. In the wet season, there are very heavy rains on about two out of three days, and the humid heat is oppressive. Rainfall and the heavy tropical rainstorms are greatest along the south coast. The climate becomes hotter and drier as you move north toward the desert and the differences between day and night temperatures are greater, as they are in our own southwest.

#### EARLY HISTORY

WEST Africa's history has been long and eventful. In the eighth century, the conquering Moslems moved into the Soudan region after their invasion of North Africa. The first ships from Europe to visit West Africa stopped along the Guinea Coast during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These ships of those early traders brought back rich cargoes; colorful names were given to different sections of West Africa according to the riches found as the Grain

(or Pepper) Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast—designations which have, to an extent, only historical significance today.

Keen competition developed among the French, Portuguese, Dutch, English, Germans, and Spanish for trading posts in West Africa. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the development of a thriving trade in spices, hides, precious woods, ivory, and gold, but the need for cheap labor in the New World soon made the slave trade far more profitable than any other. In the early nineteenth century, however, the slave trade began to be suppressed, largely on the initiative of England, and traders began to turn to the commerce in vegetable oils which is today so important in West Africa.

In the nineteenth century, especially in the last quarter, the governments of Europe, moved by political and economic motives, showed a greatly increased interest in Africa. No longer content to leave Africa to the traders, the English, French, and German governments threw themselves actively into the race to gain possession of the unclaimed areas of Africa. The result was that all of West Africa, with the exception of the independent Republic of Liberia, came under the control of one or another of the European governments, either as colonies (i. e. owned outright) or protectorates (i. e. controlled through treaties

with native chiefs). Except for the transfer of the former German colonies of Togoland and the Cameroons to Britain and France as mandates (i. e. under international supervision) following World War I, the boundaries of the political subdivisions of West Africa have been fixed for more than a half century.

#### **FRENCH WEST AFRICA**

THE largest part of West Africa belongs to France. French West Africa is a federation which includes the district of Dakar, the colonies of Senegal, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Dahomey along the coast, and to the north Mauritania, French Soudan, and Niger Colony. The French also divide with Britain the mandate over the former German colonies of Togoland. French Soudan alone is more than twice the size of Texas. France has tried to develop these colonies in such a way as to lessen her dependence on supplies from foreign countries. France has also regarded West Africa as a source of military manpower. The French have been very proud of their West African empire.

The head of the Federation of French West Africa is the Governor General, appointed by the French government and stationed at Dakar. You have been hearing a lot about Dakar. It is the capital of French West Africa



and its largest city; in fact it is the most modern city in all of West Africa. Normally it is one of France's most important ports. Its harbor, situated only 1,632 nautical miles from Brazil, is large, modern, and well equipped. It is important that Dakar should remain in friendly hands.

Other towns of importance are Conakry, Abidjan, Lomé, and Porto Novo along the coast, and in the interior, Bamako, Niamey, and Bobo Dioulasso.

#### BRITISH WEST AFRICA

THERE are four British colonies in West Africa: Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria. Nigeria is by far the richest and most populous of all the West African colonies. Each British colony has a governor who is appointed by the British government in London. In order to coordinate the war efforts of the British West African colonies, Lord Swinton has recently been made Minister to West Africa. He acts as the direct representative of the British government on matters connected with the war. In general, the so-called British colonies consist of small areas along the coast, while their interior regions are held by the British as protectorates. You will note little difference in the methods of administering colonies and protectorates however. In

varying degree British administration in West Africa is based on the principle of "indirect rule," by which native chiefs, who are directly responsible to British officials known as district commissioners (or "D. C.'s"), exercise a considerable measure of local authority on matters affecting their tribespeople.

The most important towns in British West Africa starting from the west, are Bathurst, Freetown, Takoradi, Accra, Lagos, and Port Harcourt along the coast, and Kumasi, Ibadan, and Kano in the interior.



## PORTUGUESE GUINEA

PORTUGUESE GUINEA is the only remnant of Portugal's former extensive holdings in this part of Africa. The Portuguese were important in developing trade in West Africa, but during the wars of the seventeenth century yielded their claims to other European countries. Bissau on the mainland is the capital and chief trading center. Bolama, built on a small island, is perhaps best known as a clipper terminal.

## LIBERIA

THE Republic of Liberia was founded in 1821 through the efforts of American philanthropic societies to find a permanent home for freed Negro slaves and their descendants. Some 19,000 free Negroes emigrated to Liberia and settled along the coast, principally in Monrovia, the capital city, which takes its name from the American president, James Monroe. Their descendants, now known as Americo-Liberians, though only a small minority in the population of some 2,000,000, form the controlling group in the country today. The Africans of the Liberian hinterland live in tribal societies like the native peoples elsewhere in West Africa. Most of them live by farming small plots. An increasing number have become wage-

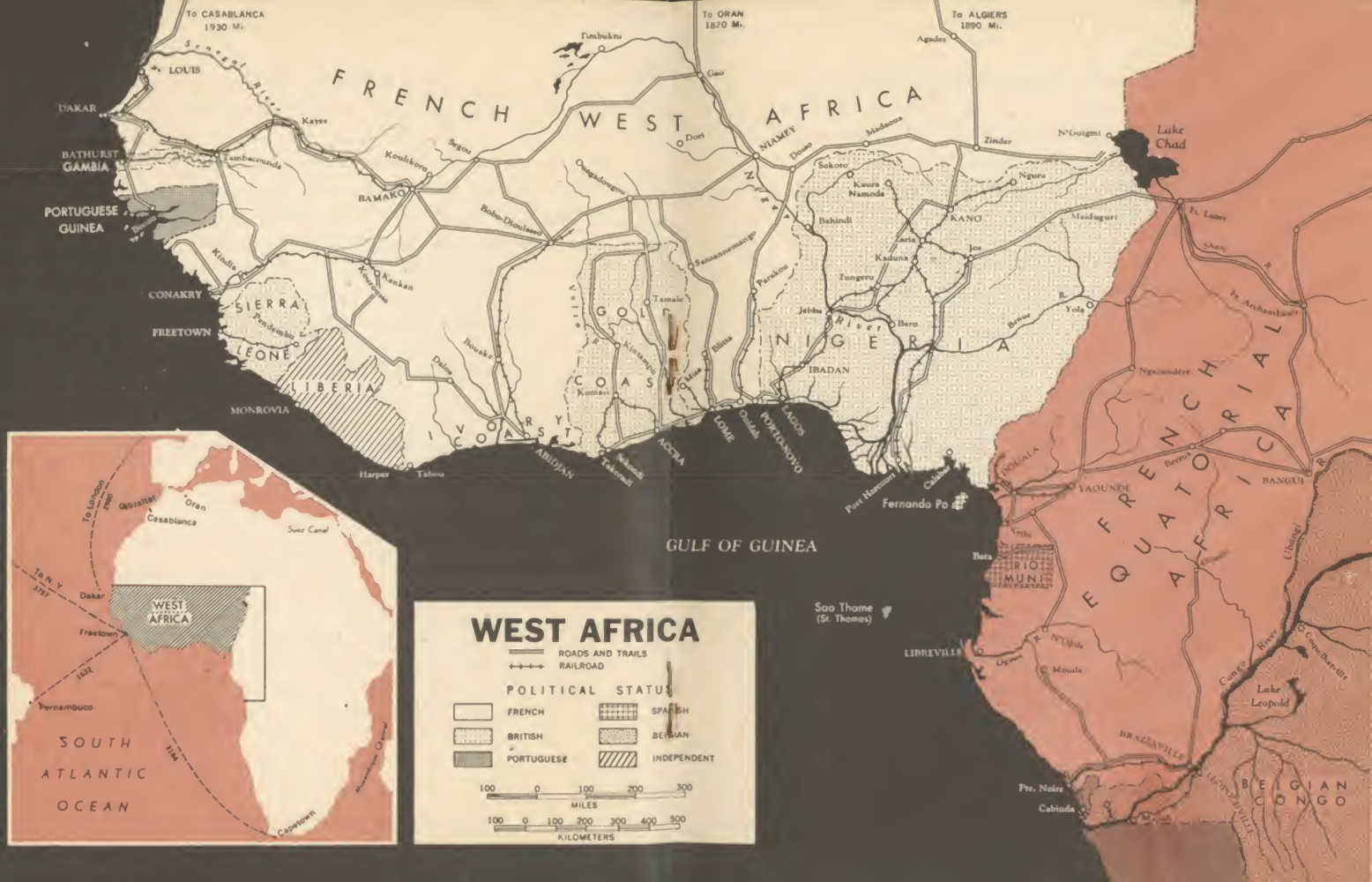
workers on the plantations and for the government. The commercial life of Liberia centers around the Firestone plantations which produce over 10,000 tons of rubber a year. The white population is normally only 300.

The Liberian government has a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution modeled after our own. Only persons of African descent can become citizens of Liberia and its government is conducted entirely by Negroes. The United States has often shown an active and friendly interest in the development of this small country. It is strategically located and very important to the cause of the United Nations.



## A LONG WAY FROM GAY BROADWAY

WEST AFRICA, which has two-thirds the area and one-third the population of the United States, usually has a white population of less than 40,000. During the war this figure has probably doubled. While in the larger





coastal towns you will find movies, tennis, golf, swimming, dancing, and horse racing, in general, facilities for amusement are limited and you'll find little to remind you of New York's gay Broadway.

In normal times life in West Africa can be pleasant enough, though you may miss the comforts of home. But if you are attracted by the unusual, keep your eyes open and take an interest in the country and its people. Your stay in West Africa can be an adventure to remember and to tell the folks about when you get home.

#### HOW AFRICANS LIVE

YOU will be among some of the most interesting tribes in Africa, whose highly developed empires were in full bloom a thousand years ago. The African kings, many of them both powerful and wealthy, with their subordinate chiefs and large groups of retainers, administered their realms for centuries before the European invasion. In Dahomey of the pre-French period, for example, taxes based on an annual census of population and property holdings were collected with amazing efficiency. Disputes were settled in recognized courts of law, witnesses were called, and in some cases professional lawyers were hired. If either party felt that a decision was unjust, he could carry the case to a higher court. Though modified by the

European administrations many of these institutions still survive.

There are highly developed arts and crafts. West African woodcarving is famous throughout the world. There are skilled leather workers, weavers and dyers, blacksmiths, potters, basket makers and calabash carvers. Some of the world's greatest sculptures came from Ife, in Nigeria, and the Benin bronzes are world famous. The smaller brass and gold castings, though little known, are excellent.

Several hundred tribes inhabit the West African area. Some of these are so small that they include only a few hundred individuals living in comparative isolation. Others are powerful groups of several million people. The desert regions are sparsely settled, but in some parts of West Africa the concentration of population is close to a thousand per square mile. In both Ibadan and Kano, in Nigeria, live 300,000 Africans but only a handful of Europeans. While almost twice as big as Miami, Fla., however, neither city has any sewage, light or water systems. Kano once boasted the largest bazaar in the world.

This tremendous population lives largely by agriculture. Farming in the old days centered around yams, bananas, and the oil palm in the south, and millet and herding in the north. More recently, a wide variety of crops of foreign



origin has become important: corn, manioc or cassava, pineapples, some tomatoes and potatoes, and the great "cash crops," cocoa in the south and peanuts in the north.

The local markets often attract thousands of people from miles around. In many parts of West Africa the market is organized and run by the women, and there bargaining is a business. Bargaining is the universal custom except in the few large stores. It pays to know how to bar-

gain in West Africa. But always bargain politely, in spite of the fact that as an American you will be expected to pay more than an African.

Work in West Africa is often done on a cooperative basis. A large group of people will get together to help one man in working his farm or building a house. He provides the food and drink, and is in turn expected to do similar work for his neighbors when the need arises. The system is much like our own old-fashioned husking bees and quilting parties. In some tribes the host hires drummers, who set a good pace and make the work seem easier.

Among Moslems polygamy (or having more than one wife) has religious sanction. A Moslem's wives—and all other female relatives—are jealously guarded, though they may appear to have considerable freedom. Among non-Moslems, polygamy exists on another basis. The Chief is usually the one who has many wives. But they rarely constitute a harem. He may know few of them by name. They are gifts from other chiefs, or members of his tribe, increasing the chief's wealth by providing additional labor in the household and field.

There is a good deal of loose talk about "buying" brides because, in many instances, an African groom pays the bride's parents in money or gifts. The payment is less a purchase price than compensation to the parents for the girl's care until maturity, and then for their loss of her labor on the tribal land.

The languages of West Africa are so varied that there is no point in trying to give you lists of standard phrases here. The languages used in one region are often not understood in another, though some, like Housa, are used throughout large areas. In French territory a simplified French called Pidgin French or "ti neg" serves as a means of communi-



cation between the French and the natives. In British territory and in Liberia a simplified form of English called Pidgin English or Creole English has developed; it is quite widespread today and you will find it used even in non-British territory. It is easy to learn since it has a limited vocabulary and a very simple grammar. Most people who speak English pick it up in a short while.

*Records and written material in Pidgin English, Pidgin French, Hausa, and a number of the native languages can be obtained through your Special Service Officer.*

#### HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS

THIS guide cannot tell you the special taboos (Don't Do's) and customs of the area where you will be stationed. It won't be hard to learn these yourself at first hand if you keep an open mind and a sympathetic attitude. An intelligent and respectful interest in local customs will help you a lot in making friends with the Africans. You will find them interested in how we live in America, and ready to respect our customs even though these may seem curious to them.

When you deal with Africans, it is important to understand two facts about the way their life is organized. First, family ties and obligations involve much larger groups of

relatives than what we mean by a "family." These ties may cause a man to turn down a good job out-of-town, even when he could take his own wives and children with him. Second, the eldest man and woman usually act as head of their group.

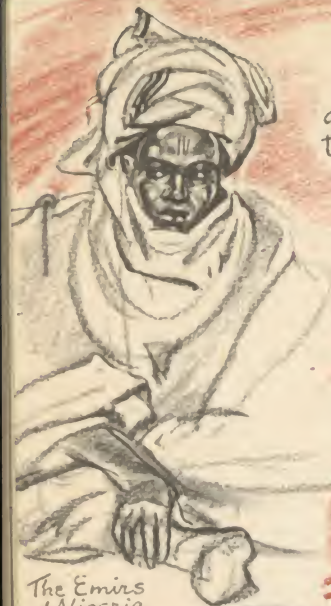
It is important to work through these customary and accepted channels. This means dealing with the chiefs, elders and family heads, and gaining the friendship of the priests, medicine men, and other influential people. All payments and "dashes" or tips to influential Africans should be made through your interpreter or guide. They are not customarily handed to such persons directly. But make certain that the money gets in the right pocket.

Social position is very important. The order in which people are seated and food is served depends on rank. The more accurately you observe these customs, the better you will get along.

Africans are highly critical of individual behavior. In their own society, chiefs and elders are expected to behave with the dignity befitting their position; if they degrade themselves in any way, they lose the respect of their followers. Africans do not respect anyone who does not respect himself. The same severe standards of judgment will be applied to you. If you are loud or excessively hearty, if you get drunk in public or behave badly, if you associate



The Peoples of  
West Africa  
are divided into many  
tribes with different  
languages  
and  
customs



The Emirs  
of Nigeria  
rule millions  
of subjects

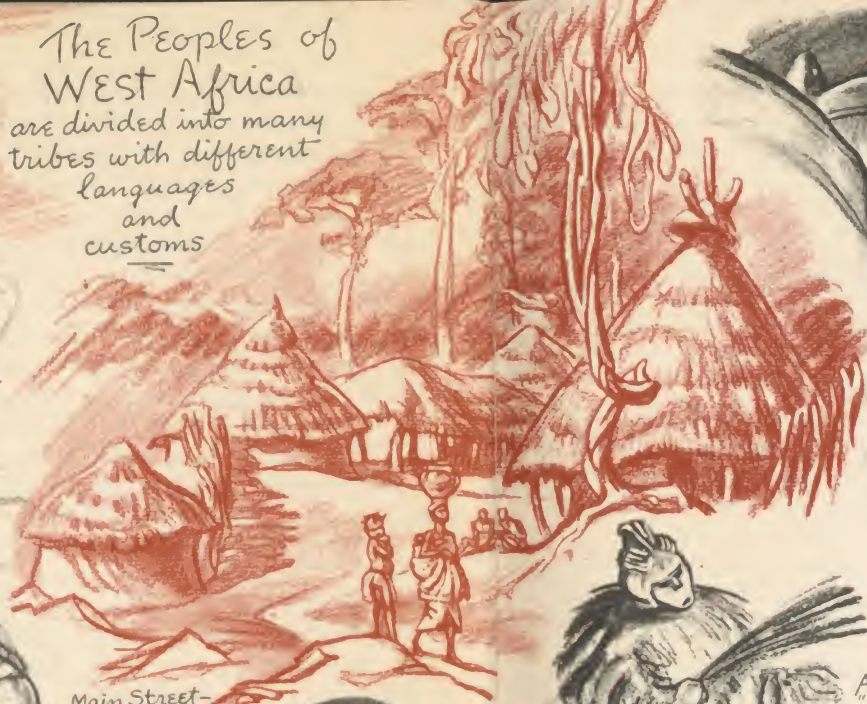


A  
Sierra Leone "Mammy"

Main Street—  
FRENCH  
WEST AFRICA



A belle  
of GAMBIA



Mud houses of  
Kano-NIGERIA



"Devil dance"  
LIBERIA



Ashanti  
"Talking"  
Drums  
carry  
messages  
from  
village  
to  
village  
of the  
GOLD  
COAST

with loose women or other people who are looked down upon, you will forfeit the esteem that would normally be accorded to you as a foreigner. Treat an African with some formality. Many Africans dislike horseplay and backslapping. They like to shake hands.

Africans have a keen sense of justice. They will accept criticism if they have done wrong, but be absolutely sure that *you* are not the one who is making the mistake. Never act simply on suspicion. Never discipline an African in front of others. Public shame is one thing he will not forgive.

Africans are polite and put great emphasis on proper forms of etiquette. Their languages contain different forms of greetings for different situations. For example, you use different forms to a person who is working, walking, or at home. In some tribes it takes a good 5 minutes to say "hello" politely. Our traditional American abruptness may shock them at first. If you learn to use even one or two of these greetings and responses correctly, the people will like it.

The main thing, however, is the *spirit* of courtesy and politeness. If you show this, the Africans will understand and forgive mistakes you may make through not knowing their customs. If you show that you really want to be friendly, you'll get along.



*Things done gently are sure to prosper;  
things done by force are sure to cause  
trouble. (AFRICAN PROVERB.)*

#### **RULES FOR HEALTH**

TROPICAL diseases have been serious obstacles to exploration and colonization. The early missionaries told of countless fevers and deaths which they thought were due to "miasma" or night fogs. Modern medicine has taught us the real causes of these fevers and has given us remedies for most of them. But you cannot afford to be careless.

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease, and is the one really dangerous disease for Americans. Dysentery and typhoid come from impure water and food. Venereal diseases, leprosy, and numerous skin diseases come from contact with infected individuals. These diseases may be serious.

Sleep under a mosquito net at all times, and be sure that the net on your bed is in place by dark. When you go to bed, tuck your net carefully under your bedding. It is a good idea to take a flashlight (if you have one) to



bed with you and to see that this is done right and to get rid of all mosquitos inside the net. Learn to sleep so that your body does not come in contact with the net.

Be sure and wear long trousers and mosquito boots at night; malaria mosquitos bite low. If you live in a screened house and if you can get "flit," see that the house is thoroughly "flitted" every day, see that there are no cracks through which mosquitoes can enter. Then try to spend your evenings inside. West African mosquitoes are small and have the get-away of an American fly. You may not see many mosquitoes, but don't be fooled. The only sure way to avoid malaria is to avoid being bitten by the infected mosquito.

Small doses of atabrine or quinine act to suppress the symptoms of malaria; these drugs should only be taken on the advice of the station surgeon.

Watch carefully for cold hands, headache, and slight fever. If you notice these symptoms, see a doctor. When treated promptly, malaria is no worse than a cold.

Never drink water except from a chlorinated Lyster bag or unless it has been boiled for 10 minutes in a covered pot. Even filtered water must be boiled, and the boiling should always follow the filtering. Water used for washing the teeth, or washing tooth brushes, requires the same treatment as drinking water. Dysentery can

also result from dirty dishes or anything dirty that gets into your mouth, and it can be carried by flies. Be careful.

Beer and wines, if you're sure they are properly prepared and bottled, are safe. Milk when available should be boiled before drinking. Meat and fish that have *not* been thoroughly cooked are dangerous.

All vegetables should be carefully cleaned and cooked before eating. Lettuce, tomatoes, and green salads must never be eaten. Thick-skinned fruits should be washed and peeled before eating, but thin-skinned fruits should be cooked.

Your feet must be covered at all times. Do not go barefoot, even in the house. Your feet may get infected by parasites or skin diseases from the floor or rug on which other people have walked. Wear slippers when you go to bed and keep them inside your net. Keep your shoes off the floor at night and knock them out when you put them on in the morning; scorpions and spiders often get into them.

Wash and bathe frequently; thorough scrubbing with soap and water is the most effective measure known for preventing tropical skin diseases.

Apply iodine or another disinfectant to every wound or scratch, however slight. Have all open sores treated and keep them well bandaged.



Venereal diseases are almost universal in West Africa, especially in the coastal towns. There are prostitutes in West Africa, most of them diseased. These women usually live in their own districts. In some places they are licensed but everywhere the medical inspection service is most casual. The odds are all against you if you take a chance. If you do—remember—take a prophylaxis.

It may become necessary to take extra salt to prevent symptoms of salt loss caused by excessive perspiration. The Surgeon General recommends two salt tablets or one-third teaspoonful of table salt for each quart of water used.

You can work as hard in West Africa as you would at home in the summer, so long as you don't overdo it at first, when your body is adjusting itself to the new environment.

Wear your sun helmet, even on cloudy days, when you go outdoors; it provides free ventilation around your head. Do not try sun bathing the way you would at home. Don't think you are tough enough to challenge the African sun and get away with it. Don't swim in small streams or stagnant pools because certain blood parasites might get into your body.

Don't take a chance. That's the soundest rule you can follow in West Africa.



#### THINGS TO DO AND NOT TO DO

AVOID all political arguments in West Africa, whether with English, French, or Africans. Don't discuss confidential information if you have any. Remember, there are always ears listening.

Be friendly and polite to the local inhabitants. This will pay you dividends.

Remember that the African, though his skin is black and his ways strange to you, is a sensitive and intelligent individual and will bitterly resent slurs against his race, tribe, or country.

Remember that the African is in his own country, on his own land, and that you are a guest and must conduct yourself accordingly.

Do not be overimpatient about the slow tempo of work in West Africa. Neither Europeans nor Africans there have been accustomed to American speed and will have to adjust themselves to it gradually.

Remember that there are many educated Africans who

will resent being treated without respect.

Don't brag about American accomplishments in the war.

Show a decent respect for African customs, religious beliefs, and practices and never wisecrack about them.

Stay away from Moslem mosques and Moslem meetings. In fact, it will be wise to avoid all sacred places and meetings unless you are specially invited.

Never hit an African, never swear at him, never punish him.

Avoid any expressions of race prejudice.

Africans wish to be called "Africans" or by their tribal names. They do not like the term "native" and are unfamiliar with "Negro."

While many Africans do not like to be pointed at or greeted with the left hand (which they use for calls of nature), they will overlook such acts on your part if you are friendly and tolerant.

You may cause trouble for yourself if you try to be too familiar with West Africans before you know them well. They are not accustomed to back-slapping, but they do like to shake hands.

Keep it in mind that when an African calls you "Massa" (master) he usually hopes to get something from you.

Africans are a generous people and will appreciate generosity on your part, especially with regard to cigarettes and candy. Razor blades are coveted and mirrors are a luxury.

Tipping is an established custom in West Africa and small tips ("dashes") will pay dividends when you want favors done.

Remember that the African women and girls who are not bashful are certain to be unclean.

African women, like women everywhere, should be treated with respect; they have husbands and sweethearts who will resent your meddling with them.

If you can pick up a few words in the local African tongue, it will help you to get on well with the people.

Don't make the error of thinking of the African as a savage or a child. He thinks and reacts to things just as you do.

Remember that on foreign soil you are the representative of your country.



The Tuaregs

trek for hundreds of miles

# THE MOST IMPORTANT TRIBES

Tribal group	Population	Location
Akan (including Agni, Ashanti, Baule, Fanti, Twi).	2,600,000	Ivory Coast; Gold Coast.
Ewe.....	660,000	Togo, Gold Coast.
Fon.....	400,000	Dahomey.
Fula (Fulani or Peulh)...	4,100,000	Throughout West Africa.
Hausa (in its broader usage).	13,700,000	Do.
(Hausa proper) .....	6,000,000	Do.
Ibibio.....	785,000	Nigeria.
Ibo.....	3,500,000	Do.
Kanuri.....	1,300,000	Do.
Kru.....	800,000	Liberia, Ivory Coast.
Mandingo (including Bambara Diola, Malinke, Vai).	2,700,000	French West Africa, Gambia, Portuguese Guinea, Liberia.
Mendi.....	1,000,000	Sierra Leone, Liberia.
Mossi.....	1,600,000	Ivory Coast.
Temme.....	550,000	Sierra Leone.
Wolof (including Serere)...	875,000	Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia.
Yoruba.....	3,600,000	Nigeria, Dahomey.



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## Date Due

Nov 11 '53



